THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) Yes, Sir

(b) and tc) No. Soft drinks in 250 ml. and 300 ml. bottles are not considered close to each other and hence the difference between them is not difficult to differentiate.

Competition faced by CTL

1772. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SrfAR-MA: Will the Minister of COAL be Pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that, Indone sian and Australian companies have al ready out-priced Coal India Ltd. in the global market and it now faces grim prospect of severe competition at home;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) whether the steel plants forced to cut cost of production, are now increas ingly switching over to imported coal be
cause of its low ash content; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken by Coal India Ltd. to contain this situa tion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJ1T KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Indian coal is being exported only to neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. India is not a major exporter of coal. In the domestic market indigenous coal producing companies will face competition from imported coal as well as falling coal prices in international market,

(c) Existing supply *o'* coking coal from indigenous sources is not adequate to meet the full demand of steel plants. Imports of low ash coking coal is also being resorted to for blending with indi-genous coking coal for quality improve-ment.

(d) A committee consisting of Technical Experts from Ministries of Coal and Steel was constituted, which has recom-raede-d steps to be taken for progressive reduction of imports of coking coal.

These recommendations inter-alia in-clude setting up of new washeries, carry-ing cut modifications to existing washe-ries, augmenting production of coking coal irom existing and new mines and making available better quality coking coals Irom Assam and Meghalaya. Pri-vate entrepreneurs are also to be encou-raged to set up washeries to supplement the supplies.

Coal exclusiverly for public sector

1773. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHAR-MA: Will the Minister of COAL be plea
sed to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that according to Industrial policy statement of July 1991, coal is exclusively for public sec-tor;

(b) whether it is also a fact- that coal production has increased from 77.22 MT in 1973 to 238 MT in 1993;

(c) whether the policy statement is a factor which prohibits participation of the private enterprise in this sector; and

(d) if so, whether Government propose
to review its approach in this matter and if so, when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and .(b) Yes
Sir.

(c) and (d) Government have since amended Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 w.e.f. 9.6.1993. The Act as of now, allows private sector participation in coal mining operations for captive consumption for power generation, pro-duction of iron & Steel, washery opera-tions and other end uses that may be notified by the Government.

Funds provided to BCCL for' education

1774. SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PIL LA.I: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state;

(a) how much funds are being provid-ed to the management of BCCL in the edueitaon account by Government; and